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# Food and Home Notes

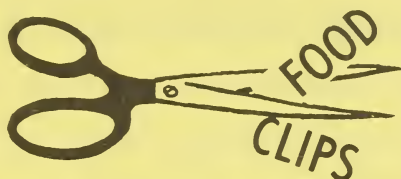
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Menu planning? It's an art -- try for variety, contrast, and eye appeal along with considering food preferences and cost.

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Don't use the same food on consecutive days -- plan meals around a casserole, a soup, or main dish salad. Use crisp, firm foods with soft, creamy ones.

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Use colorful foods in combination with those of little or no color -- broccoli spears with creamed potatoes; pimiento or green pepper in corn pudding.

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A garnish goes a long way with color -- and nutrition. A green pepper, a radish or cucumber, stuffed olives, a tomato wedge, sieved egg, sprig of parsley. Let your imagination help.

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Want an easy way to crack nut shells? Leave the nuts in warm water for several hours or overnight.

## SAFER SLEEPWEAR

—for children

Fabric in children's sleepwear -- now required by law to meet flammability standards -- naturally is also subject to normal wear and damage which could cause changes in the fabric. These changes could also affect the service life as well as the consumer acceptability of the sleepwear which has been treated.

Durability problems caused by wear and tear will be investigated through research agreements with the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Tennessee. Common household stains (such as milk-soiled fabric) and their interactions with the flame retardant finish is one of the problems under study. What criteria will be used? The feel of the garment, appearance, retention of flame resistant characteristics, and the durability of the fabric after repeated washings.

Consumers can look for a radical improvement in tiny-tots sleepwear (infants to sizes 6x). Accidents concerning this age-group of children suffering from burns is four times more than that of people in other age groups.

## NUTRITION CLASSES —

Unique methods of teaching good nutrition and budget-saving food buying habits engender the spirit of volunteerism across the country. The need for this type of involvement is no secret to educators, nor to those who volunteer -- the need is great whether it is working with low income families, senior citizens or the affluent students of college age. Learning about food and nutrition is an important project for all.

The Cooperative Extension Service, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture has extension aides -- over 8,000 who work in the Expanded Nutrition Education Program. The program has been in operation for five years in 1500 different areas of the country.

In the town of Winchester, Clark County, Ky., every Saturday morning an enthusiastic group of children between the ages of 4 to 19 turn up at the First Baptist Church -- to learn about nutrition from Nancy H. Tucker, Expanded Food and Nutrition Project Assistant and her helpers. This group of youngsters, now called "Saturday's Kids," learn by lesson and laboratory (kitchen) how to plan relatively inexpensive meals, how to buy food as economically as possible, how to prepare food, how to serve food, and what constitutes a balanced meal.

The "Saturday's Kids" program started as a summer project 18 months ago and since then the project has grown from a small band of little girls to a group of more than 70 boys and girls. Now there are about 30 specially trained volunteers including talented students from Southeastern Christian College who add luster to the program with guitar playing and folk singing. It's a fun occasion and the "volunteers" make the most of their audience who participate, learn, and enjoy from the Saturday sessions.

## — "for Saturday's Kids"

Various gimmicks and teaching techniques are used to explain the many facets of good eating habits. Games which emphasize the values of various foods, food spelling bees, quiz programs, and drama get the lessons across -- and the activities are fast-moving and group-centered to appeal to children from lower income homes.

One of the most successful techniques was involving many of the youngsters into a "nutrition play" which attracted more than 150 members of their families to the "presentation." There was real excitement on opening night and "just learning about food" became a major project with the audience as well as the participants. The townspeople of Winchester immediately identified with and felt great pride towards the "nutrition mission project" sponsored by the church.

For most of the students, welfare has been a way of life in their families. Many of these youngsters -- whose family incomes range from \$2,000 to \$4,000 a year -- have had school problems or know the juvenile court system. All these young people need help -- not only in food habits, but, this is the entree. Many of the families were unaware of the possibility of getting on the Food Stamp Program -- now those who need this help have the opportunity of taking advantage of it.

Saturday -- the big day for getting together -- is also a big day for the youngsters to help fix and eat a delicious lunch under the guidance of the extension aides and the volunteers. For many of the children this is their only meal of the day. For many of the children this is a beginning in understanding what food is all about -- and why they need to have it and how to enjoy. For many of the children a new way of life is developing -- lessons learned because people are working together.



## IT MAY BE A PRETTY PACKAGE —But, it costs!

Packaging materials are expensive. The value of packaging materials used for farm-raised foods jumped over 8 percent last year -- it now tops \$10 billion.

Metal cans led the increase in value -- up 12 percent. Glass containers increased more than 9 percent -- paper products 8 percent, plastics 6 percent, and wood containers, 1 percent.

Large grocery bags will continue to be in short supply; one national chain reported paying 2 cents each -- up about 14 percent over 1972. A regular grocery bag holds about a \$7 to \$8 sale -- the retail food chain profit reportedly (in 1973) was 3½ cents on an average sale. This indicates that the cost of bags may equal over one half of the grocery store profit, according to a report by the National Economic Analysis Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535A, Office of Communication/Press Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or phone 202-447-5898.